

Council nominees: Steve Mastellotto

For November elections past President Steve distributed a list of nominees willing to stand for election for stated positions. He emphasized nominations from the floor are welcome and there are openings for volunteers to assist with important matters such as preparations for coffee break.

Director of Observing for October: Juliana Grigorescu

Halloween, Juliana explained is a very old astronomical event originating with the Celts in pre-Christian Britain. As the Sun declines toward Winter they feared it might never return. The Lagoon Nebula (M8) a star forming area in the Southern sky was also scary to them. Pegasus was her feature constellation with its huge open square. Two sides are parallel to the lines of right ascension and two stars of interest are Markab and Alpheratz.

A sight of naked eye interest in early evening is the big red star Antares not far from dazzling white Venus. Others are the Draconid and Orionid meteor showers. Mercury and Saturn will be visible before dawn.

Often ignored, Juliana pointed out asteroids Vesta and Ceres are easy telescope objects in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. Less easily visible and often best viewed in a telescope she listed a variety of Messier objects of interest at this time of year.

In space news, the Messenger spacecraft second fly-by of Mercury is providing lots of data about the planet. The Cassini space craft will fly-by Saturn's moon Enceladus once again this Month. The Hubble space telescope is badly in need of a forthcoming overhaul. October dates to remember are: Oct 4th 1957 when Russia orbited "Sputnik" (fellow traveler), the first spacecraft to orbit the Earth. Fifty years ago on Oct 1st 1958 NASA was established.

Pierre thanked Juliana for her interesting presentation and adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

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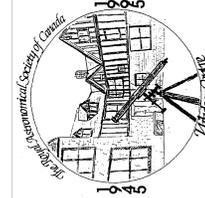
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AURORA



Nov. 2008 The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre Volume 34, Number 3

Flyer

Next Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009
7:30 p.m.

Maidstone K of C Hall
10720 County Road 34
(Old Talbot Road)

Speaker: T. B. A.

Topic: T. B. A.
NOTE THE NEW STARTING TIME.

Upcoming Events

Hallam Observatory Open House:

December 6, 2008 7:00 p.m.

Celestial Events:

- Nov 25 Mercury in superior conjunction
- Dec 05 Mars in superior conjunction w/Sun
- Dec 13 Geminid Meteor Shower
- Dec 21 Winter Solstice
- Jan 03, '09 Quadrantid Meteor Shower

Centre Events:

Dec 05 Annual Dinner Social

Other Events:

Feb 10/09 Council Meeting

Chaired by Dr. Pierre Boulos

Pierre welcomed members and guests. Minutes from the September meeting were read and a correction required. Rick is not Dan Marian. They were accepted after a motion by Steve Pellarin seconded by Al Des Rosiers.

Main Talk by Steve Pellarin

Mars Landers

Steve gave a brief illustrated history of Mars Landers and described the many complex problems and difficulties making successful landings. About half have crashed. Safely landed craft have sent back huge amounts of useful data. There are currently several on the surface and others in orbit transmitting photographs, videos and results from atmosphere and soil sample analysis.

Phoenix, the most recent is excavating and analyzing soil and water ice beneath a thin layer of Martian soil in its high Northern latitudes. Steve described the various mechanisms and equipment used in great detail with lots of tantalizing shots showing the many capabilities of the craft. The search for signs that life may be possible or even exist in any form on Mars is the prime purpose of this mission.

Steve also showed lots of photos of other craft, their purpose and in some cases their fates on making faulty landings. Orbiting craft have incredible cameras and pointing capabilities even capturing one craft hanging under its parachute descending to land.

So much data is coming from Mars Landers Steve proposed a future presentation to report on some of the results in more detail.

Pierre thanked Steve for his well illustrated enthusiastic presentation.

Coffee Break and 50/50 Draw

Donna Ronconi and Randy Groundwater officiated, preparing hot coffee and serving a nice collection of Tim Horton delights. The 50/50 draw was held and the meeting resumed.

Reports

Fund Raising Events:

Pierre summarized two of three events and reporting the Point Pelee event brought in \$260 and the Pelee Island Winery affair \$930. He called on Al Des Rosiers to report his event. Al held a yard sale with items donated by members, friends and family. Held on Saturday Sept 20th and Sunday the 21st the event was highly successful. Al brought in \$973.54 from the sale! The remaining items were sorted for sale to a metal scrap dealer, saved for a sale in 2009 or loaded into a small trailer for their final voyage to oblivion. Al thanked members for helping and generously contributing so many valuable items. He also asked members to keep the 2009 sale in mind for further surplus item donations. A further proposal was to place some items for sale on consignment.

Al also mentioned Sue Lihola has voluntarily stocked the observatory warm room with supplies of water, pop corn, soups, hot chocolate and other goodies for members and guests enjoyment.

Continued >>>

Council Meeting Report: Pierre Boulos

Pierre noted the proposal to organize in concert with Pelee Island Winery an overnight star party on Pelee Island. During the International Year of Astronomy in 2009 it would be the furthest south star party in Canada. The merits of observing from a dark Island in Lake Erie would be unquestionable. He also announced observatory open house dates for 2009 had been established, thanks to Randy Groundwater.

Secretary: Dave Panton

Dave reported there were no outstanding items.

Treasurer: Ken Garber

In the bank to date there is \$4088.76. Al's garage sale return is not included in this figure. Ken reminded members who wish to use the observatory their annual key fee of \$40 is due in October.

Librarian: Rick Marion

Dan revealed the plan to place the club 6 and 8 inch Dobsonian telescopes in the warm room at the observatory for use on site, withdrawing them from rental use. The 12 inch telescope lacking a mirror will be removed and stored elsewhere.

Newsletter Editor: Ken Garber

For the newsletter Ken needs articles written by members.

Public Relations: position open

Four events at Hallam are planned. On Thursday Steve Mastellotto is hosting a grieving family wishing to see the star named in memory of their deceased daughter. On Sunday Pierre has a group of students from the University of Windsor visiting Hallam to further their studies on Urban Recreation. Steve Pellarin asked for help to host two Cub Scout packs at the observatory 17th On November and 21st.

Public Relations: Tina Chichkan

Tina reported the September observatory open was a success with lots of visitors. She asked members help her plan the Christmas Social by sending her an e-mail in advance of the affair on December 5th indicating the type of pot luck food item they may bring.

Light Pollution Abatement: Dan Taylor

As usual, Dan continues to be very active in LPA. He has contacted Pelee Island Council to help them plan LPA activities for the island. Tecumseh has a new lighting scheme to both reduce electrical energy consumption and light pollution. Watch for the November issue of National Geographic, featuring world- wide light pollution.

National Representative: position open

No activity was reported by Steve Mastellotto, currently following National affairs.

Observatory Director: Peter Bondy

Peter was absent. Pierre reminded members the next Public Open House at our observatory will be held on November 8th and the following one on December 6th.

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